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U.S. REACHES AGREEMENT WITH DOMINICK'S FINER FOODS

CHICAGO, IL - The Justice Department and the Environmental Protection Agency today announced they have reached an agreement with Dominick's Finer Foods LLC to resolve alleged violations of federal regulations to protect stratospheric ozone.

Under the agreement, Dominick's will take steps that will cut by over 35 tons future releases of chlorofluorocarbon refrigerants, known as "CFCs", that destroy stratospheric or "good" ozone. Within two years, Dominick's will retrofit 23 of its supermarkets in and around Chicago with a system that uses non-ozone-depleting refrigerant and will retrofit or retire the refrigeration systems in six additional Chicago-area stores. The company also agreed that, in any new stores built after the agreement takes effect, it will only install commercial refrigeration units that use an EPA-approved non-ozone-depleting refrigerant. The company will pay a civil penalty of \$85,000 for alleged past leaks of ozone-depleting refrigerants.

"Today's agreement demonstrates that strong enforcement of our nation's environmental laws results in a much safer environment," said Assistant Attorney General Tom Sansonetti. "The actions Dominick's has agreed to today will benefit not only the ozone layer, but will also ensure a safer environment for our future generations."

"We commend Dominick's for taking this positive step to protect the stratospheric ozone layer by agreeing to convert the refrigeration equipment in all of its stores," said EPA Region 5 Administrator Thomas V. Skinner.

Other steps include development of a plan to manage its refrigerants and assessment of the company's facilities performance in EPA's Energy Star Building Program.

The agreement resolves a complaint alleging that Dominick's violated EPA commercial refrigerant leak repair, testing, recordkeeping and reporting regulations. This is EPA's first settlement with a grocery store and the first settlement under the commercial refrigerant leak repair regulations of the Clean Air Act.

When CFC refrigerants deplete the stratospheric ozone layer, dangerous amounts of cancer-causing ultraviolet rays from the sun strike the earth. Production of some of these chemicals was stopped in 1995, and federal law strictly controls their use and handling.

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